[pp. 1-107 not processed]

THE LUO OF KENYA

GENERAL(4)

[101] 133 The Luo; or Nilotic Kavirondo, inhabit the territories bordering Victoria Nyanza, north and south of the Kavirondo Gulf. Kavirondo is in the south, a flat plain relieved by a few rocky tors and ridges upon which the people build their homesteads; in the north the country is hilly. The rolling, grassy savannahs, the swamps, numerous water-courses and patches of thornwood forest make it comparable to the environments of the other more northern Nilotic tribal groups.

105 The country is suitable for pastoral and agricultural activities, and the lake is rich in fish. The people are mainly agricultural and grain foods form the chief part of their diet. Cattle, sheep and goats are kept. Cattle are the chief criterion of wealth. Women and girls are strictly forbidden to have anything to do with them and there is every indication that cattle enter into the social life of the people to the same degree as among the Nuer and Dinka. Fishing plays a large part in

(1) Driberg, *The Lango*, 1923, pp.148-52.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.152. (3) *Ibid.*, pp.166-7.
(4) Except for three articles by Evans-Pritchard, there is practically no information on the Luo of Kenya.

[p.108]

economic activities and although, formerly, there were organised hunts, today hunting is not much practised. 105

LUO EXPANSION

Until the time of European intervention the Luo appear to have been gradually expanding towards the south. This resulted in their division into two parts (on the north and south of the Kavirondo Gulf) namely: the Luo of Central Kavirondo and the Luo of Southern Kavirondo. Evans-Pritchard writes, "The southwards migration seems to have been across the Gulf from Uyoma and Asembo to Karacuonyo, and not round it, and to have taken place over several generations, commencing, if genealogies are to be trusted, about seven generations ago. Across the Gulf the Luo came up against the Bantu (Mwa) and Nilo-Hamitic (Langu) tribes."(1) The assimilation and absorption of these tribes was incomplete at the time of European occupation of the country. During this process of expansion there was a considerable dispersal of lineages so that lineages of the same clan are found in both Central and South Kavirondo. The Luo tribes least influenced by the Bantu are the Uyoma, Seme and Asembo and such tribes as pushed the southernmost Luo into Bantu country. 174

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

At the present time Luoland is divided into a number of administrative locations which vary considerably in area and population. These locations, according to Evans-Pritchard, correspond approximately to the old tribal areas of the Luo. The expansion of the Luo has divided them into two main groups with Kisumu location forming a narrow territorial link between them: 631 101

1. The Luo of Central Kavirondo, known as *Joiye* (the inside people).
2. The Luo of Southern Kavirondo, known as *Jooko* (the outside people).(2)

THE TRIBE *(Piny)*

Among the Luo the tribe is an autonomous political unit. Like the Nuer tribes it may be defined in terms of the way in which homicide was formerly regarded and treated. 619 682

Compensation for homicide *(cut)* takes the form of handing over cattle, or a girl, to the kinsmen of a slain man so that heirs may be raised for him. Compensation is only paid for the killing of a tribesman, for men of other tribes, slain in war, raids or private conflict, are regarded as *wasigu*, enemies. On the other hand, compensation is not paid for killing a clansman, for such a deed is regarded as a sin, and propitiation and atonement have to be made by the sacrifice of an ox provided by the imme-

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, 1949, No.VII, p.2.
(2) *Ibid.*

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
FL11 Luo FL11

many cattle, sheep, and goats and most of their country is suitable for a pastoral life. Fishing plays a big part in the economy of the lakeside tribes. Hunting is little practised to-day, but in the old days organized battues were a regular feature.

The homestead, the residence of an elementary family or joint family, is generally called *dala*, a Bantu word, but in the more purely Luo parts of the country the Nilotic word *pacho* (pl. *mier*) is used, especially by the older men. It is usually surrounded by a thick hedge of euphorbia, a narrow gap in which is the entrance to the kraal, round which are the huts and granaries. Nothing is said about the domestic life of such homesteads nor of kinship life in this article, for its purpose is to outline the nature of the larger structural groups.

2

At the present time Luoland is divided into a number of administrative locations. These locations, shown on the map, vary considerably in size of area and population. According to official returns most have populations of under 20,000 and the only two with populations of over 30,000 are Alego (53,604 with density of 244 to the square mile) and Samia (41,011 with density of 193). Density of population is greatest in some of the fertile northerly locations: North Ugenya (29,363 with density of 515), South Ugenya (7,497 with density of 341), and North Gem (29,014 with density of 387). It is lowest in some of the lakeside locations in South Kavirondo: Kasingiri (1,904 with density of 12), Kasigunga (2,041 with density of 21), and Gwasi (4,934 with density of 42).

These locations correspond approximately with the old tribal areas of the Luo. The main differences are that in South Kavirondo Karacuonyo location (28,207 with density of 167), Mumbo location (26,465 with density of 174), and Kabondo location (7,926 with density of 126) comprised a single tribe, as did North Gem and South Gem (19,442 with density of 237), North Ugenya and South Ugenya, and West Kano (28,617 with density of 265) and East Kano (25,730 with density of 158).

It is beyond question that the whole of Luoland was once occupied by Bantu and Nilo-Hamitic tribes and that the pressure which has continued, particularly against the Bantu, on the confines of Luoland to the north, east, and south, almost up to the present day is the end of a gradual process of expansion and assimilation. The Luo have been greatly influenced by Bantu culture during its development.

The expansion of the Luo towards the south has resulted in their division into two parts between which Kisumu location forms a narrow bridge, the Luo of Central Kavirondo, the *Joiye*, the 'Inside People', and the Luo of South Kavirondo, the *Jooko*, the 'Outside People'. The southwards migration seems to have been across the gulf from Uyoma and Asembo to Karacuonyo, and not round it and to have taken place over several generations, commencing, if the genealogies are to be trusted about seven generations ago. Across the gulf the Luo came up against Bantu (*Mwa*) and Nilo-Hamitic (*Langu*) tribes. The conquest and cultural

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
FL11 Luo FL11

assimilation of these tribes were incomplete when European occupation of the country slowed down the momentum of colonization. The tribes living to-day to the south of the gulf who are said to be Luo in origin and who speak Luo are Kano, Nyakac, Karacuonyo, (Mumbo, Kabondo, and Karacuonyo), Kocia, Kanyada, Gem, Kanyamwa, Karungu, Kadem, Kwabwai, Kanyadoto, Kabwoc, and Sakwa. The other locations on the sketch-map are occupied by Bantu tribes who either speak Luo only, like the Kagan (included in the map in the Kocia location) and the Mohoru; or speak Luo as well as their own language, like the Kasigunga, Kaksingiri, and Gwasi. In one instance, that of the Wanjare, who are fraternal to the Karacuonyo, a Luo tribe is said to have adopted a Bantu dialect to the loss of their own tongue because, according to the Luo myth, their ancestor killed his father in a hunting accident, and they are, on account of their Luo origin, regarded more favourably by the Luo than other Bantu-speaking tribes. The Kamagambo and Kanyamkago are said to be of Nilo-Hamitic origin, though both speak Luo to-day. Tribes which to-day speak only Luo and have Luo customs are regarded as Luo and it would be most insulting to call a member of one of them '*Jamwa*' or '*Langu*'. There is much intermarriage between Luo of pure descent and assimilated or partly assimilated Bantu. At the present day there is also some intermarriage with the Kisii Bantu, though I was told that a Luo would not take one of their daughters as his chief wife. In Central Kavirondo assimilation in the areas of conquest and settlement has gone much further and, except for the Waholo, who speak both Luo and Bantu, the line of linguistic cleavage is clearer cut.

Luo expansion at the expense of the Bantu was like a line of shunting trucks, each tribe driving out the one in front of it to seek compensation from one yet further in front, generally a Bantu tribe. Thus when the Uyoma and Asembo tribes jointly occupied what is now Uyoma territory they found there the tribes of Karacuonyo and Gem (of South Kavirondo) whom they pushed across the gulf into what was then Bantu country. Later the Uyoma people drove out the Asembo people into their present territory. These movements have led to a considerable dispersal of lineages so that lineages of the same clan are found to-day in both Central and South Kavirondo. Lineages of the same clan are found in the Gem tribe of South Kavirondo and in the tribe of the same name in Central Kavirondo, lineages of the Kanyada tribe have agnatic kinship with the Jokakan lineage of the Alego tribe, and the Luo elements in the Kowak and Kamageta tribes of Tanganyika are said to have come from Kajulu and Kadimo and to have kinsmen in those areas.

It is not surprising therefore that the late comers who pushed other Luo tribes into contact with, and conquest of, Bantu are held to have been the least influenced by Bantu culture in their speech and way of life. This reputation is enjoyed by the people of Uyoma, Seme, and Asembo. The low-lying country of these tribes, a thornwood savannah plain with patches of swamp and treeless grassland, from which Seme takes its name, suffers from seasonal drought: in all reminding one of the homelands of some of the Nilotic cousins of the Luo in the Sudan.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

CHAPTER III.

Nilotic Tribes of Kavirondo.

101 The generic name used of these peoples by themselves is Ja-Luo. The Bantu Kavirondo people call them Awa-Nyoro. A very common term for them is Wa-Nife.

231 241 361 *Modes of subsistence.*—They all live by agriculture. They reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts. Nearly all the villages are surrounded by euphorbia hedges; formerly many villages had mud and occasionally stone walls, but this custom has died out. They breed cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls.

[224] 226 *Hunting and fishing.*—They dig pitfalls for elephants and also spear elephants. They catch large quantities of fish in the Lake Victoria Nyanza by means of large conical wicker traps "*dema.*" The process is as follows:—They have two enormously long ropes; one end of each rope is secured on shore, and the ropes are then paid out into the lake, one rope floats on the surface and from it hangs a fringe of papyrus stalks; the other rope is a ground rope, and is weighted with stones, and the two ropes are connected at intervals. By means of canoes these ropes are gradually brought round in a semi-circle the size of which gradually decreases. The fish rush shorewards to escape from the drawing in of the net, and rush into the mouth of the big wicker traps which are placed in a row in the shallow water near the shore. At the same time the women walk up and down dragging smaller meshed traps in which they collect myriads of tiny fish the size of a sardine. They fish a great deal at night by torchlight. They state that they get the best hauls of fish after rain; in the dry season they catch [824] comparatively few. Rafts of ambatch wood are used for laying out the net (ambatch is a very light spongy wood growing on the lake shore; it has a prickly [439] bark). They split and dry large quantities of fish and carry it inland from the lake for considerable distances to sell for grain.

227 501 Lines and hooks are also used to a certain extent by the Nyakach people and others. The people bordering the lake possess a few dug-out canoes and also a few of the sewn canoes bought from Baganda or Basoga.

441 *Bridges.*—They build rough bridges of timber across the rivers when in flood, but not suspension bridges like the North Kavirondo.

264 252 *Cooking, etc.*—They cook in earthen pots inside their huts, and also in the verandah of the huts. All cooking is done by women. The food is served up in little baskets. The father eats with his sons; they generally eat in a little separate hut with open sides built for the purpose. Women eat separately and inside the house.

372 *Fire.*—They know the use of firesticks but rarely need them, as they can always obtain a glowing ember from one or other of their neighbours.

[pp. 11-25 not processed]

§ 2. Nilotic Kavirondo.

101 The generic name of the Nilotic Kavironda is Ja-Luo. By the Bantu Kavirondo they are called Awa-Nife or Nyife, also Awa-Nyoro.

193 *Ja*, *Ka*, and *Ku* are all prefixes signifying "clan" or "tribe" among the Nile tribes.

The prefix *Tho* signifies language among these people.

Kami or Gemi (call themselves *Gemi*).

101 Situated to south of River Nzoia between Mumia's and Ugowe Bay. Tribe
619 second in importance in Kavirondo. Nilotic origin; belong to Ja-Luo family.
131 Head chief, Odera Ulalo, son of Umoli. Chief next in importance, Odera Sandei, son of Ulo. Other chiefs: Ilari Atanda (son of Lochi), Wayoti Aratieri.

Subdivisions:—

-Juothi—Odera, Ulalo, Odera Sandei, Atanda Agura.
-Karareo—Ogwel.
-Kagelo—Serua.
-Katumo—Ngaga.
-Kanyadeti—Siwa.
-Kanikwaya—Njwang Kiliko, Ilari, Aratieri.

Lego.

Situate to south of River Nzoia and south-west of Mumia's Nilotic tribe. Part of the tribe acknowledges suzerainty of Mumia. Important chiefs: Ukola Ndonya or Ndong, Ngonga.

Subdivisions:—

-Lafu—Unyango.
-Kukwiri—Othiambo.
-Anyango—Ngonga.
-Kaluo—Ndonya.
-Karuothi—Ukola, Ukelo, Aponyo.
-Yanyujuok—Odero.
-Jamoro—Ogoti, Tao Mwana Uguto.
-Yasiji—Udongo.
-Yakadengi—Otwera.

[pp. 36-51 not processed]

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

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Nife or Nyife.

Situate north bank of Nzoia River on the road from Mumia's to Port Victoria; a few live on south bank of the river. Nilotic tribe. Principal chiefs: Kero, Mulasi, Atipu, Unyango.

Subdivisions:—

-Punji. Chiefs: Kero, Mulasi and Atipu.
-Techi—Unyango, Nyatengi.

Kisumu.

Situate on south-west flanks of the Maragolia Hills and on the lake shore north and west of Railway Inlet. Nilotic tribe. Principal chiefs: Ngola or Ugola and Ugada.

Subdivisions:—

-Kisero. Chiefs: Onduu.
-Karatenya—Ngola or Ugola.
-Kadongo—Utuma, Wongo, Ugonyi.
-Korando—Ugada, Ogalo.
-Kaponja—Yareri, Magutha, Wambi.
-Sagami—Opio, Mdieki, Kagonyo, Ndumo, Andoka.
-Kadedi—Kimea.
-Yakamenya—Umuchi.
-Yakagonya—Onduu, Aiyeko.
-Kanyawegi—Uchieng.

The Kisero and Yakagonya clan are now amalgamated under Onduu.

Semi.

Situate south of the Kami tribe between that tribe and Ugowe Bay. Formerly unfriendly with the Kami people. Nilotic tribe. Principal chiefs: Wadego, Yagudi, Awina.

Subdivisions:—

Kongo. Chief: Wadekwa.
Tieno—Awina, Abong.
Kalunji—Okechi, Okoko.
Kadipelo—Yagudi, Achola, Ndolo, Hukum.
Kombewa—Okoti, Gumba, Okola.
Were—Wadego.
Kokeri—Abuma, Achachi.

The Kadipelo or Kadipel clan is subdivided as follows:—

Kumbija—Uiti, Okech, Nyabenda.
Konyiwera—Mbima (son of Yagudi).

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

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Kobita—Undijo.
Kaura—Abundi.
Kanyabong—Hukum.

With the Were clan are incorporated the Kanyadwero, chief Ochanyo. With the Tieno clan are incorporated the Dero.

Sembo.

Situate on north shore of Ugowe Bay. Nilotic tribe. In a measure admit suzerainty of Odera Ulalo. Principal chief: Adola.

Subdivisions:—

Umia—Orero, Yadera.
Kalei—Adola.

Uyoma.

Nilotic tribe, situate at entrance to Ugowe Bay on north shore. Principal chiefs: Lochi (died 1899), Naiya.

Subdivisions:—

Kabuda—Naiya, Kivera.
Katwenga—Lochi (dead), Oginga, Ubuya.
Kobong—Okelo.
Kukwiri—Kariech.

The Kabuda clan live around Laiya Hill, the Katwenga to the east and the others to the north.

Sawakwa or Sakwa.

Nilotic tribe on lake shore to the west of Gemi. Principal chiefs: Ugada, Undieki.

Subdivisions:—

Kanyamwanda Nasimwa—Ugada, Urimba, Ubondo.
Karabori—Nyela, Odero Opio.
Kamiyawa—Buru.
Yakakodi—Odero, Ukumugwam.
Kuduoli—Mbewa, Ngewira.
Kanyavinya (incorporated with Yakakodi).

Timu or Utimu.

Situate on lake shore south of Nzoia mouth. Country called Kadimu; called Wayimbo by Mumia's people. Nilotic origin.

Subdivisions:—

Kadimu—Anam.
Rodi—Uwori.
Niaton—Ugia.

The Kadimu live on the lake shore, the other clans inland.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

101 131 619

Songa.

Situate on the south bank of River Nzoia near Port Victoria. Nilotic origin. They are quite a small tribe. Principal chiefs: Unyando (Wa-Mtoni), Unyando (Wa-Juu).

Kanu or Kadibo (often called Wa-Kitoto).

A Nilotic tribe living in an alluvial plain east of Ugowe Bay. Friendly, vast quantities of food, population large. Principal chiefs: Kitoto, Amimo and Niagoli.

Subdivisions:—

Nyamoga or Moga. Chief: Kitoto.
Kajulu—Abongo (this clan is now all scattered).
Kadibu or Kanu—Yosanga, Hongo.
Kumulu or Koloa—Okwachi, Oyaro, Niagoli.
Kubura—Amimo, Hongo, Unongono, Uyangi, Uyoo, Arudi
Kamagaga—Unyoro, Unyangnoro.
Kabonya—Mbuya, Kitaga, Unyanga.
Kamrungu—Undieki.
Kimera or Sua—Mlema, Ugundi, Ununga, Ora, Yabedo.

The big chief Sendegi, now deceased, belonged to the Sua clan.

Khoro.

A Nife tribe situated between the Lego and Kami. Head chief: Uluma, also Kahuri or Nyango. The Kanyamoti (chief, Handa) are allied to Khoro. They formerly lived near River Nzoia, but fled during Nife fighting; settled near Odera Ulalo.

Subdivisions of the Khoro people:—

Makhoya. Chiefs: Orodi, Chiwani.
Umwangwi—Uluma.
Winyi—Meto.
Mache—Ndeta.

Kabi.

Nilotic tribe, allied to the Lego and Songa tribes. Live near Gangu lake, in the vicinity of the delta of the River Nzoia. Chief: Masingo.

Aiendi.

They live on mainland opposite Lusinga country, called Kasagunga. Nilotic origin. Head chief: Abomba.

Subdivisions:—

Aiendi—Abomba.
Sali—Mahinya.
Diang—Okech.
Tema—Usambo.
Kanireri—Urua.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

Ramba.

101 131 619 Live on south side of Ugowe Bay, opposite Uyoma country Nilotic people. Head chief: Gori Kogalo.

Subdivisions:—

Kadweti. Chief: Awino.
Kabonyo—Osewi, Magolo.
Kajuang—Yariwo, Arani.
Kanyamwa or Kanyambo—Kogalo and Ogalo.
Yahunda—Chikungi, Uyamu.
Saki—Usodo, Uyumbi, Monguwiri.
Kachola or Kologi—Othina.
Kumungu—Mwai.
Kuchieng—Owino, Tigo.
Kasudu—Ukoli.

[578] The Saki people live near Usau hill, and there is a feud between them and the Kanyamwa owing to the latter having been driven from the lake shore, and thus losing their fishing rights. The Saki are very friendly with the Uyoma tribe and the Kanyamwa with the Sawakwa.

Nyakatch.

Live at south-east corner of Ugowe Bay. Nilotic origin. Very frien dly people, live in great dread of the Lumbwa. Head chief: Uhuri.

Subdivisions:—

Kadianga. Chief: Uhuri.
Kabodo—Magero.
Jimo—Mwana.
Kajembo—Atek.
Kandaria—Omono.
Kuguta—Sewe.

Kalachonyo.

A large tribe of Nilotic origin on the south side of Ugowe Bay. They stretch from the west of the Nyakach people to the west side of Uma or Oma Mountain. The head chief is Nyakiti.

Subdivisions:—

Kanyajok. Chief—Nyakiti.
Uma—Ugwan.
Nyaluo—Ngar.
Kanyiperi—Umolu.
Adueti—Nyangu, Odondi.
Yakandaiya—Ugalu, Oyugi.
Utienu—Ngare.
Kodera—Opiawili.
Unyango—Ugalu.
Akelu—Achieng.
Ojuach—Ogado.
Ukwainu—Kimuto.
Kabondo—Laiila.

[pp. 57-60 not processed]

HOBLEY. EASTERN UGANDA. Plate I.

Map of KAVIRONDO and neighbouring country, Brit. E. Africa, showing racial distribution.

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[End Map and plate I]

5: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1903 FL11 Luo FL11
Nandi FL13

N 173 821

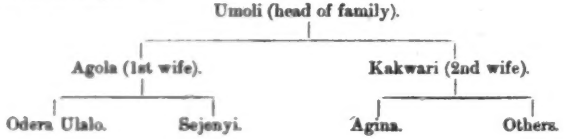
About 30 miles east of Kisumu in Nandi country, there is a forest-clad extinct volcano named Tinderet, and the Kamililo Nandi, who inhabit its southern and western flanks, tell a legend that high up on the mountain there is a cave, in which Ilet, the spirit of the lightning, who descended there in the form of a man, took up his abode. After his descent it rained incessantly for many days, and the Oggiek or Wandorobbo hunters who lived in the forest were nearly all killed by the terrible downpour. Some of them, while searching for the cause of the rain, found Ilet in the cave and wounded him with their poisoned arrows. Thereupon he fled, and died in Arab[1] Kibosone's country; directly he was dead the rain ceased.

Laws of Succession Among the Ja-Luo.

L 622

In the Gemi tribes, and several others of Nilotic origin, the following rule holds with regard to the chieftainship. The chief is always the eldest son of the wife whom his father married first.

To give an example :—



Agola was married to Umoli before Kakwari, therefore the chiefs are henceforth chosen from the offspring of Agola, and upon the death of Odera Ulalo, his son being quite small, the second son of Agola, Sejenyi by name, was elected chief. This rule was observed, although Agina is an older man than either Odera or Sejenyi.

It is possible that this may point to the existence in past times of uterine filiation among this race.

Origin of Name of District of Kavirondo.

L 101

I have often made enquiries into the origin of the name of Kavirondo, and the Kisumu elders inform me that it is the name which the people of the south side of Kavirondo Gulf apply to the people of the north side; it is, however, a term only used when they meet at a dance and smoke bhang and sing about old times. They call the people of the north side Kavirondo, because they were vanquished by the latter and driven across to the south side of the bay; it was thus, originally, more or less an epithet of reproach.

N 193

[1] In the Nandi language *Arab* in front of a prefix name means "son of," thus Arab Kibosone means "son of Kibosone."

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

CHAPTER XXV

THE NILOTIC KAVIRONDO AND THEIR COUNTRY, GOVERNMENT, MARRIAGE, BIRTH AND PUBERTY

The tribe and their district—origin of the tribe—chiefs as rulers—land tenure—the local chief as the magistrate of his village—courts and court fees—making peace between two sections of the tribe—theft—adultery—murder—inheritance—marriage customs—distinctive dress of married women—birth customs—birth of twins—initiation at puberty.

● 101 **The tribe and their district.** The Nilotic Kavirondo are so named to distinguish them from the Bantu tribes of Kavirondo. They are a branch of the great family known as Nilotic tribes or tribes of the Nile Valley, and are quite distinct in language and custom from Bantu tribes. This particular branch may be found extending southwards from Mount Elgon along the coast of Lake Victoria Nyanza into German territory. They are settled in groups of villages among the Bantu and yet are quite distinct from them and do not intermarry with them. The clans met with live chiefly in the hills bordering on Lake Victoria. The mornings and 291 evenings are comparatively cold in these hills, yet the people are absolutely destitute of clothing; indeed they consider clothing as indecent, and members who have been abroad and have adopted clothing are requested to put it away during 142 their residence in their old homes. The features of the people are more closely allied to those of the pastoral tribes than to the Bantu. In stature the men are not, however, quite so tall as the Bahima, few of them reach six feet, five feet six to five feet eight being more usual. Their frame is slim like that of the Bahima, and the nose inclined to have a bridge. Again their love for cows is stronger than that of the Bantu. The women are shorter than the men, they are slim and athletic, a stout woman being seldom found; this may be accounted for by the amount of exercise they take and their constant activity in the field and home.

[p. 275]

[pp. xi-xii, 1-274 not processed]

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

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The manners and customs of the *Ja-luo*, a fragment of the Nilotic peoples which is now isolated, are very similar to those of the Aluru (to the north-west of the Albert Nyanza) and the Japalua (incorrectly called "Shefalu"), who live in the northern part of Unyoro. It would seem, indeed, as though at some time or other the Ja-luo of Southern Kavirondo had not come down direct from the north-west, from the Lango country where their nearest relations reside at the present day, but that a large tribe of Nilotic people closely allied to the Acholi and Lango had formerly

14: Johnston G-4. 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

inhabited Northern Unyoro (where a fragment of them remains), and that the Bahima and their Bantu subjects drove this branch of the Nilotic people across the Albert Nile to the north-west (where they remain as the Aluru) and into Busoga (across the Victoria Nile) on the south-east. From Busoga they appear to have been driven on by the Bantu right through the Kavirondo country until they finally settled and throve round the shores of Kavirondo Bay, where they at present bear the name of Ja-luo or Nyifwa. It is a remarkable fact that the Ja-luo to this day are

427. A RAFT MADE OF PAPYRUS BUNDLES, WHITE NILE

called by their Bantu neighbours "Abanyoro," which would indicate that this theory of their origin is correct.

The Ja-luo reside in fixed villages of from ten to fifty huts, which are surrounded by hedges of aloe and euphorbia. Formerly they built mud or stone walls round their settlements in imitation of the Bantu Kavirondo to the north. But this is a custom which has now died out. The houses are similar in appearance to those of the Bantu tribes around them, as is the arrangement about the two fireplaces. Young unmarried girls usually sleep together in one large hut under the care of an old woman. The young men and boys of the village also sleep by themselves, generally

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

THE NILOTIC KAVIRONDO.

By G. A. S. Northcote.

101 The Nilotic Kavirondo, or Jaluo as they should more properly be called, who inhabit the north-eastern shore of the Victoria Nyanza, belong to the same family as the great Dinka tribe of the Soudan and are near relations of the Aluri and Acholi tribes which live on both sides of the Nile near Wadilai, the differences being far less marked than those between two adjoining Bantu tribes usually are.

174 In all probability, therefore, the Jaluo originally formed one tribe with the Acholi. What their reasons for migration were cannot be ascertained, but probably it was due to overcrowding or to a dispute about the chieftaincy. The natives themselves can throw but little light on the matter: they state that they came from the north-west under one big chief and that when they *again* became too numerous they split up into smaller chieftaincies. The fact that they lay stress on their again increasing numbers points to the conclusion that overcrowding [626] was their motive for migrating; but as will be seen later, they use secession as their chief weapon against an unpopular chief. Had they been driven out by conquest there would be abundant traces of such a cause, but no such signs are visible.

142 In appearance the Jaluo are a fine race, not so much remarkable for beauty of face as for stature and development. They are a large-boned and deep-chested tribe, somewhat fleshy and very muscular. They present a great contrast in this last respect to the other Nilotic tribes in British East Africa, the Masai, Nandi and Lumbwa. All four are capable of great endurance, but none of the last three named can claim to be a muscular race. The superior physique of the Jaluo is probably [262] due mainly to their agricultural and industrial habits and to the fact that their food is mainly vegetable, while up to the great cattle plague of 1883, the Masai, Nandi and Lumbwa lived entirely upon animal food.

Facially the Kavirondo have rather squat noses, large mouths and big wide-opened eyes. The everyday dress of the men consists of a goat skin hung over the 291 right shoulder, or of nothing. In most cases they have quantities of iron wire on [30] their legs and arms and strings of beads round their necks. The women are usually completely nude, except that married women wear a small grass tassel behind, hanging from the waist; latterly, however, they have taken to wearing a strip of cloth round the waist about six or eight inches in breadth and only just meeting in front.

[58] The tassels are discarded when a woman's husband dies and cannot be again worn until she is re-married. It is significant of the respect which the Jaluo have

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

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THE KAVIRONDO LUO & CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL DIVISIONS

[p. 2]

[p. 1 has no textual material]

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

LINEAGE FORMATION AMONG THE LUO

I. THE SETTING

The Luo people constitute the third largest tribal unit in eastern Africa, and are by far the largest of the Nilotic-speaking peoples, numbering, by 1947 estimates, some 800,000 individuals. They are entirely contained within the three Kavirondo Districts of the Nyanza Province of Kenya except for some thousands who have now crossed its southern border into the Musoma District of the Lake Province of Tanganyika.

In terms of racial distribution the Luo are the spearhead of the great southward thrust of the Nilotic peoples from the Sudan, and of this spearhead the Luo of South Kavirondo and Tanganyika are the tip. The nearest Nilotic neighbours of the Luo are the Padhola of the Eastern Province of Uganda, whose territory comes within a few miles of the northern Luo boundary; but linguistically their nearest relatives are the Alur who now live 500 miles away, partly in the south-western corner of the West Nile District of Uganda and partly over the border in the Belgian Congo. In geographical terms the Luo occupy the coastal plains which border Kavirondo Gulf and the open expanse of Lake Victoria for fifty miles or so on either side of the entrance to the gulf, and also the foothills and uplands to which these plains give way a few miles inland. Although their territory forms a continuous block all round the gulf, it bears no correspondence to the boundaries of the North, Central, and South Kavirondo Districts, but within each of these consists respectively of 1 out of 19, 14 out of 15, and 19 out of 30 locations.[1] These locations form the territory of lineages or groups of lineages.[2]

II. PRELIMINARY ARGUMENT

The purpose of this article is to document certain aspects of the theoretical relationship of lineage to family; to demonstrate and interpret the structural importance of females in a system based on strict patrilineal descent; to show the divergence between norm and practice in Luo lineage concepts and Luo lineage activities; and to explain the process by which new lineages of different types are formed by reference to current or recent examples.[3]

If formally questioned on the point, Luo would admit that the members of a lineage are all the agnatic descendants of its founding ancestor, both male and female, living and dead. However, as Mayer remarks (see *The Lineage Principle in Gusii Society*, I.A.I. Memorandum XXIV, p. 7), 'it is no straightforward matter to define the lineage allegiance of women', and the operative members of a lineage in its observable activities are not those who would have to be included in it according to a strict

[1] The word 'location' is in Kenya applied to the territorial subdivisions of administrative districts and has a quite different connotation from that with which it is used in the Union of South Africa and elsewhere.

[2] See Evans-Pritchard, 'Luo Tribes and Clans', *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. VII, where these groups are described.

[3] For note, see next page.

[p. 5]

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

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HOMICIDE AND SUICIDE AMONG THE JOLUO OF KENYA

G. M. WILSON

101 THE Luo ("Jaluo," singular; "Joluo," plural) are unique in that they are the only Nilotic speaking people in Kenya. Their place of origin is the Nile Valley; through the centuries by gradual expansion by war and peaceful penetration, they migrated up the Nile Valley, through Uganda, into Kenya, along the shores of Lake Victoria. The term Luo means "swamp" and Joluo "the people of the swamp." Through their migrations they have left behind other Nilotic groups in Uganda and in the Sudan.

131 The Joluo are chiefly concentrated in Central Nyanza where over half a million of them are found today. There are, however, Luo pockets in North Nyanza and also in South Nyanza.

631 The Luo of Central Nyanza are divided into twelve tribal groups. Each tribal group, with a Government-appointed chief, today forms an administrative unit, a "Location," within the District of Central Nyanza. These administrative units, laid down in the early twenties, coincide fairly accurately with the former tribal boundaries and are accepted by the people.

614 Each Luo tribe can be described as a society of agnatic parallel lineages or clans, each tracing either real or mythical descent from a common eponym or descent through an adopted or affiliated family to the eponym.

614 178 [717] The original form of the clan and lineage structure remains today in comparative purity. The Joluo people—although on the surface they have accepted Christianity—still retain the ceremonial, religious, and ritual aspects of their culture to a very large degree.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

INTRODUCTION

THIS piece of work is the result of a survey carried out in Nyahera among Luo people living round the African Inland Mission, seven miles north-west of the township of Kisumu. This investigation has provided a basis from which generalizations could be made by comparing the conditions in this locality with those in other parts of the Luo country.

Superstitions—beliefs in magic and the work of spirits —are common among the Luo people; and it appears to me that any differences in the conditions existing in various localities can be attributed to the extent to which Christian influence and economic pressure have modified the people's beliefs and manner of life.

Local differences may also be due to customs acquired from the numerous tribes contacted by the Luo in their migration. Remnants of these customs and social practices may still be found in the assimilated tribal groups.

This investigation originated from a desire to study the social development of a Luo girl. I have therefore put forward such information as I think might interest anyone engaged in educational work among the people of this tribe. I hope too that it may interest students in attempting to solve problems which would further the advance of education and broaden the outlook of parents in relation to their children.

The material put forward leaves an enormous field for comparison, criticism, and independent investigation by serious students of Luo society. The nature of the problems dealt with may also make the information appear fragmentary; but I have attempted, within the serious limitations involved, to provide a structure on which

21:Huxley Q, T-5 (no date) 1960 FL11 Luo FL11
Kikuyu FL10
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CHAPTER 6

The Reluctant Luo

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THE Luo are the second largest tribe in Kenya, coming next to the Kikuyu, and at the moment the most influential politically. This is because most Kikuyu politicians went into detention camps at the time of Mau Mau. While Kikuyu cats were away, Luo mice played vigorously, and grabbed the best political cheese. Speaking generally, the Luo are hefty, black-skinned, somewhat ox-like people with prominent teeth, a reputation for making good labourers and a rather slow-witted approach to life.

Needless to say, there are plenty of exceptions. Mr. Tom Mboya is a Luo and, while he has been called many things, 'slow-witted' has never been among them. Their natural food is fish and they are not by nature a cattle people. Their sturdy women smoke pipes with long clay stems. The Luo are not Bantu but Nilotic and their affinities, lingual and tribal, lie more with people in Uganda, such as the Acholi, than with any other Kenya tribes. They are surrounded, however, by Bantu peoples, with whom they share the wide, fertile, steamy and mainly flat basin that surrounds Lake Victoria. Around this basin lie hills from which warrior tribes look down on them, formerly as an eagle looked upon its prey. Far to the south lie the plains of Masai.

People who have dealt with other tribes find the Luo difficult. Their obstinacy is legendary, they are inclined to be sullen and suspicious. The Kikuyu can be all these things, but they are nimble-minded, subtle and, for those they like, have charm. Luo people can be brave and loyal but charm is rarely among their attributes. They are faintly Teutonic, in an African fashion.

So it is not surprising that of all the major Kenya peoples, leaving aside the Masai, the Luo have put up the stiffest